

de Goncourt, who was still mourning his brother, and feeling so discouraged that he hardly dared to take pen in hand. With Zola and Goncourt came Flaubert's young disciple, Guy de Maupassant, at that moment little more than one-and-twenty, then Ivan Tourgeneff and Alphonse Daudet, whom Zola had already met in the days of "L'Eve'nement," these five being for a time the only intimates of the author of "Madame Bovary." They were not a very gay party, it would seem. One Shrove Sunday, says Zola, while the carnival horns were resounding in the streets, he sat till night-fall listening to Goncourt and Flaubert, who for hours did not cease recalling the past and lamenting its disappearance.¹

Goncourt, on his side, receiving Zola about this time (June, 1872), once more found him sickly and neurotic, complaining confusedly of rheumatism, heart and bladder trouble, and mastered by such acute nervous trembling that he had to employ both hands to carry his glass to his lips.²

At that date Zola was planning a novel on the Paris markets — "Le Ventre de Paris" — and dramatising his earlier book, "The'rese Raquin," working, so he told Goncourt, some nine hours and a half every day. When his play was finished he offered it to M. Hostein, the director of a new Parisian theatre, La Renaissance, and

after numerous alterations had been effected, its five acts being reduced to four, it was staged and produced on July 11, 1873, when it met with a curious reception. The more frivolous, the "society" section of the audience, could not endure such tragic sombreness, and Franciscjue Sarcey, who held that the stage only existed for the amusement of the public, declared

¹ Zola's " Documents Litteraires," p. 178.

³ "Journal des Goucourt," Vol. IV, p. 44.